

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022

Christine Surmolian

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Christine Surmolian and I am a registered voter in Rocky Hill, CT.

I am here to testify regarding some of my grave concerns of the proposed budget for DMHAS.

One major importance that have helped me over the years is having a case manger who has helped me to get a new therapist. That being said, without having a case manager to help find the new therapist I would of relapse with emotional setbacks, that would of altered my lifestyle.

In that light I would like to commend Governor Lamont for:

Preserving the allocation for Supportive Housing Services- along with investment in the Department of housing budget for 350 units of additional affordable housing and \$2.8 million to fund supportive housing services. I believe preserving the allocation for young adult services is important because I was a young adult when my depression first arouse. Those services have helped me regulate my daily living tasks. Another commend I like to bring light to is providing \$1.2 million in new resources to provide mental health peer supports in hospital emergency departments. When I went to an Emergency Department for my mental health I was treated in fair care, but I would like to see more activities provided, and to be more involved in my plan of care.

However, there are things that Governor Lamont's proposed budget does not address that are of concern to me:

I would like to see an increase in funding allotted to the budget for fellow mental health clients in need of case managers. Personally, my case manager has helped me tremendously, and I feel strong about having more case managers and social workers added to the mental health field to provide support services for my peers.

I strongly believe that having a long-term plan in effect for the increase funding budget to focus on peer support mental health field members needs to be put in place.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my (lived) experience with you about what this would mean to me/my loved one/people I care about!